



## *Project Concept Summary*

This project will create a design plan for enhancing Robert Oliver Place as a central public space of the village center with new pedestrian and street amenities. Trees, art and special treatments will visually expand the courtyard between the barns out onto Robert Oliver Place and connect with the Interfaith Center.

The following document contains community input from all work group meetings. Five elements were determined to be important to the success of the project; they include:

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### **PHYSICAL AND VISUAL CONNECTIONS**

- 1) Create a physical treatment that visually extends the courtyard into the roadway. Use special paving materials or colors as a possible treatment to emphasize the “T” roadway in front of The Other Barn. Courtyard between the barns seems hidden and needs to be revealed as part of connecting the barns to the Interfaith Center.



- 2) Make a strong link to the Meridian Square building and possibly relocate the police trailer. The existing trailer site has been improved with plumbing and electrical work.
- 3) Build a stronger connection from OMCA buildings to Interfaith Center and Meridian Square
- 4) Connect the more private courtyard space and Fire Rock Grill visually.
- 5) Provide visual appeal and unique design.

**Recommendations:** Develop three alternatives for making connections and present them to the community for input and selection at the upcoming Town Hall meeting. Refine the three alternatives into one concept.

## INCLUDE ART IN PROJECT DESIGN

### Public Art

- 1) Weave Oakland Mills history into the project.
  - a. Use history markers as an example showcasing the barns and two old stone houses in the village.
  - b. Re-interpret history through elements previously located in the village center (pictures courtesy of Columbia Archives).



- 2) Create opportunities to celebrate the people of OM as inspirations for art within the project.
  - a. Example: Randy Pausch, who graduated from OMHS, is the creator of the “Alice” computer game and designer for the Aladdin ride at Disney.
  - b. Rather than abstract forms, real people could become the subject of artistic sculpture, similar to the Rouse sculpture at the lakefront.



- c. Create senior activity art opportunities.
- 3) Design a wall with a ledge that would be used for impromptu seating:
  - a. The project needs to convey visually a feeling of undulating flow or wave.
  - b. Artistic components should be included; the form should have a low height for seating (and to maintain visibility). Art could include painting, tile, or mosaic treatments done by local school children under the guidance of an artist in residence (schools may be eligible for art grants).
  - c. Refer to any future art wall element as something other than “the wall” in respect of the Vietnam Memorial.



- d. Construct conversation benches – examples shown were sculptured benches painted by children; can also include artistic benches, wall/bench combinations.



4) Explore various types of Art:

a. Cultural Tapestry Art – examples of permanent mosaic were shown.



b. Roadway Crosswalk Treatment – examples of overlays shown, including Dura Therm application.



c. Vertical Art – can incorporate existing architecture of the OM village center area including posts, beams and pillars already present – Christos Gates, NYC; sonar tubes, Lit Glass Sculpture (example of art from Arlington, VA), painted scaffolding with banners or canopy.

- Add possible landmarks: a series of vertical art pieces ending in a tall central piece.
- Create an art-focused landmark to announce the location of important community space and arrival into the area. Currently, it is difficult to see and know where the farmers' market is when approaching from Thunder Hill.



d. Artistic Bus Shelters – examples from Arlington, VA, Seventh Street Project in Phoenix, AZ and “The Wave” in Scottsdale, AZ.

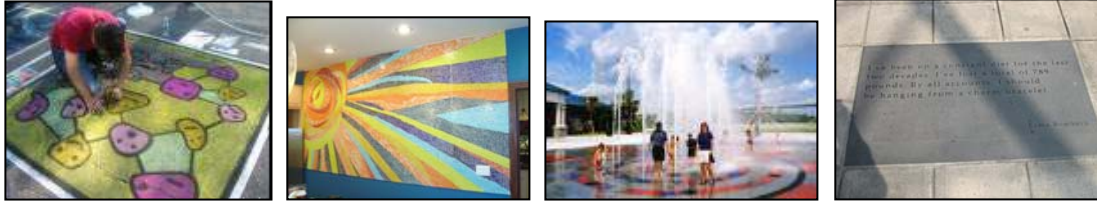


e. Memory Tiles/Bricks – community created, can be incorporated into the landscape lining walkways.





- f. Other Art Ideas – mosaic panels, solar panels, life size chess boards, concrete chess tables, poems etched in concrete, fountains with “green water feature,” chalk art, and murals.



- 5) Have the designers build changeable art into the project.
  - a. The project could provide materials only and allow residents to design and put the art work into the project themselves. The use of plywood was mentioned as an example of how art could be posted on one type of material, then be replaced by new art work.
  - b. Create walls made of materials that can be drawn on such as slate.
- 6) Move the Whistle sculpture, Celestial Serenade, to a more prominent area. It is “lost” in its current location.

### Common Streetscape Elements

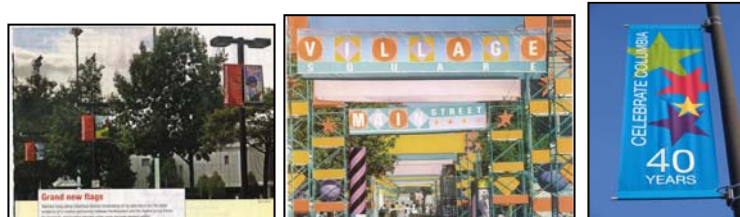
- 7) Create a visually distinctive floor. Rather than using special paving for roadway, consider the possibility of using artwork to create more visual interest with a mosaic in the street.
  - a. Sidewalk and walls can become an art walk.
  - b. Use stamped or stained concrete as a possible enhancement.
    - Street Art can be community based or commissioned art.
    - Street Art can be temporary or permanent.



- 8) Accent street trees at night with natural or colored lighting.

### Community Involvement

- 9) Create a community project led by an artist – for example, an artist worked with children from Thunder Hill Elementary School on an art project for the school. Talbot Springs Elementary School also has art work depicting children on a wall incorporated into its design.
- 10) Rotate the art over time so the community continues to have an opportunity to participate and be involved.
  - a. Use panels or banners so art work can be changed periodically.



- b. Allow residents, including children, to design tiles and incorporate into the project.

- 11) Create the project as a canvas which the community works on.
- 12) Invite the teen center and engage the schools to participate in the creation of public art.

**Recommendations:** Create partnerships between residents, the Village Board, the Interfaith Center, schools, and other community organizations to create and fund public art; and explore fundraising opportunities and grant applications.

## DEFINE FLEXIBLE, SHARED-USE DESIGN FEATURES

### Community Events

- 1) Adaptability is the key to maintaining daily functions while allowing for special events. Create a space that is much more than just a parking lot and a vehicular street.
  - a. Close the roadway temporarily for special events such as the farmers' market. Need the ability to expand for community events. New events could include holiday gatherings such as the 4th of July, classic car show, and International Festival.
  - b. Consider the use of bollards. They separate the vehicular lane from the pedestrian space for everyday use and allow for curb-less pedestrian flow when the street is closed for community activities.
  - c. Explore the possibilities for signage for special events - need for "promotional space" to advertise events.
  - d. Arrange for electrical connections and wiring for speakers, sound systems, etc.
  - e. Provide space for booths and/or tables for farmers' market (farmers set up their tables behind their trucks).
  - f. Create a lunchtime eating area with seating to attract workers from Meridian Square.



### Woonerf

- 2) A model for Robert Oliver may be the woonerf concept of shared streets from Denmark which allow pedestrians and vehicles to co-exist. The examples below are from Rockville and Silver Spring.



**Recommendations:** Program space to create interest; expand existing events, such as adding additional farmers' market days; and design for flexibility and multi-use options.

## MITIGATE IMPACTS ON ACCESS

### Bank

- 1) The Columbia Bank drive-through must remain open and will limit the extent to which all of Robert Oliver can be closed off for events. Maintaining through traffic for vehicles entering and exiting the center will also limit where the road can be closed off.



### Bus Locations

- 2) There has been discussion on moving the bus stop. The work group came up with three different options:
  - a. Split the Howard Transit route from the large MTA Commuter bus service. The commuter bus would continue to stop at the current location on Robert Oliver Place. Howard Transit buses would access the village center at a location along the storefronts between the barns and retail to better serve customers.
  - b. The bus route remains in its current configuration through the project area along a one-way street. The bus stop would move across the street from where it is now and be located along an expanded pedestrian walkway.
  - a. The third option is a possible extension of Thunder Hill Road to meet Robert Oliver Place. Buses could be re-routed along the extension and off the project area. The stop would be located along the area in front of the Interfaith Center or could be repositioned at its current location. This option is not part of the project – Oakland Mills Interfaith Center voiced strong opposition – this option is not being considered.

**Recommendations:** The work group suggests that the Community Vibrancy Committee could pursue these options over time.

## EXPLORE ADDITIONAL ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### Work Session Kickoff

- 1) Create opportunities for other improvements that build upon and enhance the center.
  - a. Expand the plaza area in front of Fire Rock and The Barn outward.
  - b. Create a picnic area nearby.
  - c. Could use the parking lot behind The Other Barn to extend the courtyard, although the parking lots location is remote.
  - d. Need a daily draw like a coffee shop or ice cream parlor.
  - e. Have vendors on the courtyard, perhaps occupying the corner of The Barn.
  - f. Create a fountain attraction that can double as an interactive child play area and performance space. Possibility of a bandstand?
- 2) The project site can tie together the future Metroventures project with the existing shops in the center. It can help give the village center character and create a “memory point” for those who visit. It could also become a catalyst for improvements to other properties.



### County Facilities

- 3) There could be ways of enhancing the bus shelter location. A new shelter could be built and enclosed to contain a small retail operation such as a coffee and newspaper stand, or display for art exhibits. Make the bus service harmonious with other uses envisioned.
- 4) Explore options for the police trailer – move within village center storefront if possible, otherwise pursue landscaping around the trailer or possible mural decoration on the exterior.



### **Cedar Shopping Center**

- 5) Enhance Robert Oliver as a “street” with adjacent green space in front of the bank drive aisle used as a new gathering space with permanent benches and trees.
- 6) From initial Jervis sketch, Cedar could consider realigning parking spaces that abut the existing landscape islands and expanding the use of the grass area that abuts the Columbia Bank drive-thru.
- 7) Cedar would be amenable to removing some parking spaces and making a wider area as a buffer. Would need to see exact drawings and the potential zoning impact. Cost would be considered
- 8) Cedar’s parking area adjacent to landscape islands might be used for a building with retail.

### **Interfaith Center**

- 9) OMIC would consider funding the extension of the sidewalk leading to the ROPE site to connect The Meeting House to the project area.
- 10) OMIC is a 501c3 entity and could also be a valued partner with grant applications for art. The OMIC members are interested in forming an arts committee and bringing works of art into the facility. ROPE may encourage the formation of a OMIC arts committee and create additional opportunities for community involvement.

### **Columbia Association**

- 11) Look for additional opportunities to build upon an arts theme in the village center. This could include reprogramming The Barn with a gallery and studio space for artists.
- 12) Use the parking lot behind the bank for temporary routing of bus service during the closing of Robert Oliver for community events.

**Recommendations:** The work group suggests that the Community Vibrancy Committee could pursue these options over time.